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THE FAME OF SIR EDWARD STAFFORD

SOME years ago, the late Martin A. S. Hume, in his edition of the *Spanish State Papers, Elizabeth*, called attention to certain evidence in the correspondence of the Spanish ambassador at Paris which seemed to him to prove that Sir Edward Stafford, English ambassador to France from 1583 to 1587, played false to his sovereign and sold valuable information to the King of Spain at a time when England and Spain were virtually at war.¹ The charge was a grave one, involving as it did the good name of a man who had commonly been regarded as one of the stoutest vindicators of England's honor over seas. But Stafford did not lack a champion. Two years after the charge appeared Professor A. F. Pollard made a detailed examination of Hume's evidence and came to the conclusion that he had not by any means proved his case.² But neither Hume nor his critic went beyond the evidence of the *Spanish State Papers*. Recently, in the light of evidence from other sources, Professor Pollard's opinion has been called in question.³ It seems therefore desirable that the whole matter be investigated afresh and that all available sources of information be exploited with a view to reaching some final conclusion as to Stafford's honesty while ambassador to France.

Sir Edward Stafford's political career and his political and religious opinions were in very large measure determined by his family connections. He was the son of Sir William Stafford and Dorothy Stafford. On his father's side he was closely connected by marriage with Queen Elizabeth herself. His father's first wife was Mary Boleyn, Elizabeth's aunt. This connection, though Sir Edward Stafford was the child of a later marriage, naturally gave him a special claim upon the queen's attention and increased measurably his opportunities for recognition and advancement at court. His mother's lineage was as distinguished as any in England, though its distinction was hardly of a sort to commend it to a Tudor sovereign. Dorothy Stafford was the child of a union between the house of Stafford and the house of Pole, both of which had cherished pretensions to the English throne. Her paternal grandfather, the

¹ *Calendar of Letters and State Papers relating to English Affairs preserved in, or originally belonging to, the Archives of Simancas*, vol. IV., *Elizabeth*, 1587-1603 (London, 1899), *passim*.

² *English Historical Review*, XVI. 572-577 (1901).

³ *Ibid.*, XXVIII. 51, note 69 (1913).

third duke of Buckingham, had lost his head on that score in 1521 and her brother, Sir Thomas Stafford, had lost his, for very much the same reason, in 1557.⁴ The Poles had not been so aggressively disposed to assert their royal claims but had been remarkable for their zeal for the Roman Catholic Church. Cardinal Reginald Pole, of course, had been largely instrumental in the reconciliation of England with Rome under Queen Mary. So Sir Edward Stafford received from his mother an inheritance which, to the eyes of Elizabeth as a Tudor, was bad politically and to her eyes as an Anglican, bad ecclesiastically. It is not unlikely that this tremendous birthright had an adverse effect upon his fortunes, though his mother, as a matter of fact, was one of the queen's favorite ladies-in-waiting and enjoyed a considerable amount of influence at court.⁵ The consciousness that he had some claim to be royal master may account for his restlessness and impatience as royal servant. It does not appear, however, that he ever cast his eyes along the road which had led his great-grandfather and his uncle to destruction.

Sir Edward's second marriage contributed another significant factor to the shaping of his public career. His second wife, Douglas Howard, was the granddaughter of Thomas Howard, the hero of Flodden Field, and the sister of Lord Admiral Howard of Armada fame. She had been married twice already when Stafford espoused her, first to Lord Sheffield, afterwards, secretly, to the Earl of Leicester, the royal favorite. Leicester never acknowledged the marriage and cast Douglas aside later when he found another lady more to his fancy. The Lady Sheffield, as she was generally called, was a woman of vigorous character. She was not unnaturally possessed by a passionate hatred for Leicester and, like almost all the Elizabethan Howards, was secretly inclined towards Roman Catholicism. Her influence on Stafford, whom she married in 1578, was great.⁶ She certainly stimulated, if she did not create, his hostility towards Leicester and was no doubt partly responsible for his leanings towards the Roman Catholic party.

In the year of his marriage Stafford entered Queen Elizabeth's service as special envoy to France in connection with the second Alençon courtship. During the next four years he spent most of his time at that business. In such wise he served his apprenticeship in diplomacy. He also enlarged his acquaintance in France, partic-

⁴ Cf. the lives of Sir Edward and his relatives in the *Dict. of Nat. Biography*.

⁵ She was Mistress of the Robes. There are several interesting references to her in the *Spanish Calendar, Elizabeth*, vols. III. and IV.

⁶ Cf. the lives of Howard, Leicester, and Stafford in the *Dict. of Nat. Biography*.

ularly among Alençon's immediate followers. With Sinier and Marchaumont, Alençon's closest confidants, he was especially intimate. The Archbishop of Glasgow, Mary Stuart's ambassador in France, declared later that Stafford was altogether governed by Marchaumont.⁷ Whether this was true or not, it is clear that Stafford's association with these men was not altogether to his advantage. They encouraged his naturally extravagant habits⁸ and his love of gaming. He admitted later to Burghley that he had lost some six or seven thousand crowns in play with them.⁹

Stafford's connection with the Alençon marriage negotiations brought him into very intimate association with the queen. It also served to define his relations to her principal councillors. The Privy Council divided upon the question of this match. Burghley, Sussex, and the more conservative members favored it. Leicester, Walsingham, and the younger more ardent members opposed it.¹⁰ Since Stafford was an enthusiastic supporter of the marriage from the first,¹¹ he found himself aligned with the conservatives. But his agreement with them was not by any means confined to this particular question. Like Sussex he hated Leicester, and that hatred, aggravated by his marriage to Leicester's cast-off wife, committed him perforce to the party opposed to the favorite. Furthermore, his family connections with the Howards and the Poles naturally inclined him to a conservative, if not to a reactionary, position upon the fundamental question of religion. He was indeed an indifferent Protestant and not at all in sympathy with a policy designed to exploit the resources of England in support of the Protestant faith. Here again he broke sharply with the militant Puritanism of Leicester and his colleagues. Under these circumstances it is not surprising to discover that Stafford, from the very beginning of his public career, enrolled himself under Burghley's banner and professed to be Burghley's man. Since he was a quick-tempered, out-

⁷ Cf. Glasgow to Mary Stuart, January, 1585, in *St. P. Mary, Queen of Scots*, vol. XV., f. 1 (English Public Record Office).

⁸ Throughout his life he seems to have been almost always in debt. There is a letter in the *Cal. St. P. Foreign, Elizabeth*, 1581-1582, dated April 19, 1582 (p. 631), from Mallart, probably a Parisian jeweller, to Walsingham, asking him to speak to Stafford about a bill for 250 crowns for pearls. Further evidence of Stafford's debts will be found in *Hatfield Calendar*, III. 212 (Hist. MSS. Comm. Rept., *Salisbury*), and in the *Calendar, Spanish, Eliz.*, vols. III. and IV., *passim*. The matter is discussed more at length later.

⁹ *St. P. France*, vol. XVI., f. 139.

¹⁰ *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, XXVIII. 34 ff. (1913).

¹¹ His arguments in favor of the match are set forth in *Hatfield Calendar*, II. 239-245. Cf. also *Spanish Calendar*, 1580-1586, *passim*, and *Foreign Calendar*, 1578-1580, *passim*.

spoken person he was almost equally frank in proclaiming his hostility to Leicester and all his tribe. As a natural consequence, he provoked the antagonism of both Leicester and Walsingham. Walsingham in particular never trusted him and since Walsingham, as principal secretary, had charge of the queen's foreign affairs, his distrust had a very profound effect upon Stafford's fortunes as English ambassador to France.

By Stafford's own account, the first intimation of an intention to send him as resident ambassador to the French court came from Walsingham himself. Stafford wrote to Burghley on June 12, 1583:

The matter I crave your Lordship's advice and to use your friendship in is this: Mr. Secretary, the night before we went to Theobald's, called me into the presence window and asked me what mind I had and whether I would be content to go into France, Sir Henry Cobham pressing to come home and the Queen not willing to send Middlemore by reason of his weakness. I answered him that I was born to serve her and so both must and would do, but desired him to provide for me, if he meant to prefer me thereunto, that I might do it with some ability, both for the better credit of her Majesty's service and her own reputation. So he, being called away to come to the Queen, without speaking to me of it, or I to him since of that, till yesterday that he called me in the lobby door and told me he had presented my name to the Queen among some others, telling me that, at the naming of me, and he speaking better of my ability to serve her than I deserve, she confessed I was fit but very poor. He asked me if I liked to have him to press her any further. He would do it if I would. I desired him not by any means and so left. For I have wholly disposed myself to depend of your good counsel and help, to do what you think best and to go as far and to do as much and as little as you think good. . . . Good my lord, do me the favor to give me your advice; first, if you will like of it at all, then how far and how much you like of, assuring your Lordship I will follow your advice and commandment in every point and observe it. If you like not of it, never to speak of it more; if you like of it, then only to depend upon your preferment to her Majesty, which I humbly crave and, if I have it, then I protest to follow the course I have done heretofore in all my negotiations, to depend upon nobody's favor but her Majesty's will and your honorable counsel.¹²

It is obvious from the tone of this letter that Stafford was willing enough to serve as ambassador in France, but was determined not to accept the position at Walsingham's hands. It is equally obvious that he was inviting Burghley to play the patron. In another part of the same letter he confessed that he was miserably poor. He had some six hundred pounds a year through his wife, he said, but he indicated no other source of income. He thought however that his friends would stand security for a loan of "a couple of thousand pounds" and hoped the queen would lend him that much without interest.

¹² Harleian MSS. 6993, f. 44 (British Museum).

Whether his resources were as mean as he made them out to be it is impossible to say. It was customary for Elizabethans, entering the queen's service, to plead poverty, in the hope perhaps of securing an increase of allowance. There is no doubt, however, that both before and after this time, Stafford's finances were in a bad way.

Stafford was finally appointed ambassador to France in September, 1583, and he went over to Paris late in the same month.¹³ Whoever was ultimately responsible for his appointment, it is evident that he began his embassy deeply pledged to Burghley's service and deeply distrustful of, if not openly hostile to, Leicester and Walsingham. The Spanish ambassador in Paris spoke of him later as Burghley's "creature".¹⁴

It is pretty clear that from the first the English Catholic refugees in France and the agents of Mary Stuart as well had hopes of Stafford. His family connections probably led them to believe that he was not altogether out of sympathy with their point of view. Not long after his arrival in France Charles Paget, one of the most notorious of the English refugees in Paris, and the Archbishop of Glasgow, Mary's ambassador at the French court, both came to see him. Stafford for his part declared his intention to exploit them for all they were worth. "I mean to use them all well", he wrote to Walsingham on October 27, "if they come to me For my part I am minded to use the Devil himself well if he could come to me in the likeness of a man to serve the Queen withal."¹⁵ Four days later Stafford wrote to Walsingham again:

I doubt not but I will keep that hand on them here that I will keep credit with them here and yet serve her Majesty truly and well. And if her Majesty do seem to the French ambassador there, or sometimes openly, to stand in some jealousy of my partiality of this part, so it be not so often and openly that he may easily find it, I do not doubt but to serve her turn with that manner of dealing very well, *sub intelligitur*, that her use of her speaking of it commonly do not bring her with use of it to think it inwardly.¹⁶

Stafford's professed intention was to pretend to favor the Roman Catholic cause in order to get information serviceable to the queen. To that end he also entertained the advances of Lord Paget and Charles Arundel who fled to Paris from England late in the autumn of 1583 in consequence of the discovery of the Throgmorton plot.

¹³ His instructions, dated September, 1583, are preserved at the English Public Record Office (St. P. France, X.). On his departure for France, cf. *Hatfield Calendar*, III. 12, and *Span. Cal.*, 1580-1586, p. 500.

¹⁴ *Span. Cal.*, 1587-1603, p. 7.

¹⁵ St. P. France, vol. X., no. 65.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 67.

Leaving aside for the moment the question as to whether Stafford's intentions were honest or not, the immediate consequence of his commerce with the Catholic refugees was to increase his ill-feeling towards Walsingham. Walsingham had written him to keep an eye on Paget and Arundel and had added: "Her Majesty hath willed me to signify to you, that she is assured that the alliance that my Lady, your wife, hath with them, shall not make you to be more remiss to perform your duty towards her."¹⁷ Stafford at once took offense. He sent a copy of Walsingham's letter to Burghley and wrote:

I have sent your Lordship the very words of Mr. Secretary's letter to me . . . and I leave to your Lordship's judgment to judge whether any man that can see any farther than the end of his nose, may not judge or think, that there is an evil meaning in the writer, and to suspect that there is an intention, if it be not already done, to make her [the queen] that it is written from, in her name, to think as evil as they mean.¹⁸

From this time forward Stafford appears to have been convinced of Walsingham's hostile attitude towards him. He complained to Burghley that Walsingham was intercepting his letters, interfering with his secret service, and in general trying to diminish his credit both at home and abroad.¹⁹ He attributed entirely to Walsingham's influence the directions he received from the queen to forbear dealing with the Pagets and Arundel altogether.

I find by proof [he wrote to Burghley on April 6, 1584] that they do what they can to have me have a disgrace. . . . If I had not so bad friends at home as I have and might follow that course that I could best find expedient here without danger of false interpretation, your Lordship should find I would know more of their secrets than I do. But to hazard the peril of evil disposed persons' power to have things misconstrued and to have things well meant evil taken, I had rather than to venture to do well and have no thanks, not to hazard so much and sleep in a whole skin.²⁰

How far Walsingham at this time entertained the suspicions that Stafford attributed to him is hard to say. There is no doubt that from the first he suspected that Stafford's secretary, a man named Lilly, was supplying information to Thomas Morgan, one of

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 94, printed in *Hardwicke Papers*, I. 212. On Lady Stafford's connection with the Catholic refugees in France cf. Stafford to Elizabeth, December 26, 1583, *Hardwicke Papers*, I. 215.

¹⁸ *Hardwicke Papers*, I. 212. Stafford's original draft for this letter is in the British Museum (Cotton MSS., Galba E vi., f. 189b). The version in the *Hardwicke Papers* contains verbal inaccuracies.

¹⁹ Cf. Stafford's letters to Burghley of April 13 and 16 and May 1, 1584, St. P. France, vol. XI., ff. 175, 179, 192.

²⁰ Cotton MSS., Galba E vi., f. 210.

Mary Stuart's most active partizans in Paris.²¹ Stafford himself scoffed at the idea and ascribed it to Walsingham's animosity. Nevertheless, there is evidence to prove that the suspicion was well grounded.²² In the late summer of 1584 Walsingham also discovered, or said he had discovered, that another one of Stafford's servants, Michael Moody by name, was secretly conveying letters from Catholic refugees in France to their friends in England.²³ But the only evidence that Walsingham suspected Stafford himself of treacherous dealings at this time lies in Stafford's own statements to that effect. In view of what follows, it seems not unlikely that Stafford interpreted Walsingham's attitude correctly. There is however no evidence to prove that, up to the end of the year 1584 at any rate, any such suspicions were justifiable.

From the very beginning of 1585, however, the shadows begin to gather about Stafford's integrity. In January of that year the Archbishop of Glasgow wrote to Mary Stuart from Paris that he had gone to see Stafford and that in course of conversation Stafford had told him confidentially that he feared the Earl of Leicester would attempt something against Mary's life. According to Glasgow both Stafford and his wife professed to be Mary's very affectionate servants.²⁴ A few weeks later, Thomas Morgan wrote to Mary on the same subject. Charles Arundel, he said, had urged Stafford to accept a pension and to offer his services to Mary and to the Roman Catholic Church. According to Morgan's report,

²¹ Stafford to Walsingham, October 31, 1583, St. P. France, vol. X., no. 67, and same to same, December 12, 1583, *ibid.*, vol. X., no. 100, and Stafford to Burghley, November 6, 1586, *ibid.*, vol. XVI., f. 139.

²² The Archbishop of Glasgow wrote to Mary Stuart in January, 1585, that Morgan had brought Lilly to him with some information from the English embassy and added that since Mary's treasurer had not paid Lilly's pension, he, Glasgow, meant to advance the sum due. St. P. Mary Queen of Scots, vol. XV., f. 1. This letter makes it clear not only that Lilly was hand-in-glove with Morgan but also that he was a pensioner of Mary Stuart's.

²³ Stafford to Walsingham, January 1584/5, St. P. France, vol. XII., f. 45. There is no direct proof that this charge was just, but Stafford himself found some reason to suspect Moody of base designs (*cf.* Stafford to Burghley, April 13, 1584, in St. P. France, vol. XI., f. 175) and later, while a prisoner in Newgate, he became involved in the so-called Des Trappes plot to murder the queen. *Hatfield Calendar*, III. 233; *Cal. Domestic, Addenda*, 1580-1625, pp. 200-203. These facts tend to confirm Walsingham's estimate of him. In a French account of the Des Trappes plot, Moody is said to have been a prisoner for debt. Teulet, *Relations Politiques de la France et de l'Espagne avec l'Écosse*, IV. 146. Burghley speaks of Moody in the same connection as "a mischievous, resolute person". *Hatfield Cal.*, III. 224.

²⁴ St. P. Mary Queen of Scots, vol. XV., f. 1. Glasgow bore further testimony to Stafford's friendliness towards Mary in a letter to Mary of March 21, 1586. St. P. Mary Queen of Scots, vol. XVII., no. 31, printed by Labanoff, *Lettres de Marie Stuart*, VII. 175.

Stafford had replied that he would remain faithful to Elizabeth while she lived and would meanwhile do everything in his power to promote good feeling between Elizabeth and Mary.²⁵ Neither of these letters in themselves proves that Stafford was playing the traitor. Both may be interpreted to mean that he was simply pretending to favor Mary's cause in order to gain the confidence of her servants and so to advance Elizabeth's interests.²⁶ But it is evident that he was on intimate terms at this juncture both with the Archbishop of Glasgow and with Charles Arundel. Probably Walsingham became aware of this fact through his secret channels of information. Consequently his distrust of Stafford increased.²⁷

Some time in the late summer of 1585 he sent Thomas Rogers (alias Nicholas Berden), one of his cleverest secret agents, to France to spy upon the English Catholics there.²⁸ It is probable that

²⁵ Murdin, *State Papers*, p. 462. Mary Stuart's letter to Glasgow in reply to his letter referred to (Labanoff, *Lettres de Marie Stuart*, VI. 363) proves that his letter reached her.

²⁶ This was the defense which Stafford himself offered. Glasgow's and Morgan's letters both fell into the hands of the English government when Mary's papers were seized in 1586. On October 2, 1586, Burghley wrote to Stafford: "I must let you know that, upon Interception of letters of *Morgan* and the *Archbishop of Glasgow*, sent from thence to the Scottish Queen, Reports have been made of you to bear some Favour to her." Murdin, p. 570. Stafford, in his reply to Burghley's letter, dated November 6, 1586, wrote: "For these reports that have been made to me of the interception of letters to the *Queen of Scots*, I cannot tell upon what grounds they should come. I wrote, July 18th, 1585, to Mr. Secretary to say that the *Archbishop of Glasgow* and some other, both French and of our nation, had asked me to show favor to the *Queen of Scots*, and had tried to see if I could be made flexible to help to some means to send to the *Queen of Scots*. I could not (to keep them in hand still with some opinion that I might be drawn to pleasure her till such time as I heard back again of her Majesty's will in it) carry myself, as I take it, otherwise nor more discreetly than by my moderate speech of her, tendering rather to the wooing of her than otherwise, leave them to live in hope that by little and little I might be drawn to pleasure her, and having received commandment not to deal in it, if I had, upon a sudden, showed another change in me unto hard terms against her, I must plainly have discovered myself openly, then, to have meant (as I did) cunning with them, under colour that I had thought of the matter and essayed some means which could not be now brought to pass by any means and therefore desired them to be contented and in truth, since, they did never speak to me of it. If upon this they took some heart i' grace and have written hope to the *Queen of Scots*, of me, I know not." St. P. France, vol. XVI., f. 139. The passages in italics are in cipher in the original. The letter which Stafford refers to here of July 18, 1585, is missing. His defense confirms the statement that both Glasgow and Morgan had been making approaches to him.

²⁷ It may be noted in passing that one of Navarre's agents at Paris, the Abbé del Bene, also distrusted Stafford, as appears from his letter to Buzanvals of April 30, 1586. St. P. France, vol. XV., f. 273. Stafford saw this letter and alludes to it in his letter to Burghley of November 6, 1586. St. P. France, vol. XVI., f. 139.

²⁸ A good many of Rogers's letters from Paris are given in the *Cal. St. P.*

Walsingham charged Rogers to have an eye to Stafford as well. At any rate, some time after Rogers returned to England he made a report on Stafford to Francis Mills, one of Walsingham's secretaries. From this report the following extract is quoted:

Sir,

According to your direction I have hereunto set down the matter that concerneth the Lord Ambassador, which matter, being both dishonourable and very perilous, is worthy to be noticed and wisely to be foreseen.

First, by a letter which Thomas Fitzherbert wrote to Geoffrey Foljambe I do find that the Lord Ambassador, in consideration of 6000 crowns and in performance of his promise did show to the Duke of Guise his letters of intelligence out of England.

Secondly, that he imparteth also his said secrets to Charles Arundel. . . .

Thirdly, there was a captain that had served in the Low Countries (whose name I remember not) that passed by Rheims towards Paris, who had a packet of letters from Dr. Gifford and others to Charles Arundel and others at Paris, who presented the said packet to the Lord Ambassador, but he delivered the letters again to him to carry into England and gave secret notice to Fitzherbert and the rest to seek out the party and to procure his letters out of his hands. . . .

And further I find that Arundel can send any man into England by the ambassador's means, which is very necessary to be looked unto; and Arundel did secretly procure letters of commendation on my behalf to his honor for my return into England upon hope that I should or would receive his letters at his return from Spain, which maketh me think that I shall hear from him if he be returned.

Lastly, it was concluded between the ambassador and the rest that the better to increase his credit in England they would deliver him from time to time such intelligence, or the first fruits of the books or libels as should first come forth and be grateful unto him, which was curiously observed by the papists for all common matters, but for other matters, they never troubled his head withal.²⁹

Briefly, Rogers charged Stafford with being on confidential terms with Arundel, with forwarding papists' letters, with providing means for Catholic refugees to despatch letters and messengers to their friends in England, and with revealing valuable secrets to Arundel. The gravest of the charges, however, was that Stafford was being successfully bribed by the Duke of Guise to show him the English despatches.

Domestic, Addenda, 1580-1625, pp. 158 ff. Some information regarding Rogers is given in an article entitled "Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot", by Father J. H. Pollen, in *The Month* for September, 1907. Exactly when Rogers returned to England is not certain. He was certainly in England on July 21, 1586. (There is a paper of this date in his handwriting which was certainly written in England, in St. P. Domestic, vol. CXCI., no. 23.)

²⁹ St. P. France, vol. XVIII., f. 370. This paper is undated and unsigned. It is in Rogers's handwriting and was probably written in the summer of 1586, shortly after his return from France.

In weighing the value of this testimony against Stafford's integrity, it is necessary to bear in mind that Rogers was a professional spy. The nature of his occupation was not such as to attract honest men. Most of Walsingham's secret agents were disreputable characters and Rogers was no better, although rather cleverer, than his fellows. Indeed, his success as a spy was largely due to the fact that he was a past master in the arts of deceit. Most of the information with which he supplied Walsingham he gained by pretending to be an agent of the Roman Catholics. Under these circumstances it may fairly be urged that he was not above deceiving Walsingham himself. He was no doubt aware that Walsingham suspected Stafford's honesty, he was naturally desirous of cultivating Walsingham's good graces, and he may very well have borne false witness against Stafford upon the supposition that any testimony damaging to the ambassador's character would be welcome to the secretary. So that Rogers's charges in themselves can hardly be taken as conclusive proof of Stafford's treachery.³⁰

But Rogers's testimony does not stand alone. Some time in the early autumn of 1585 Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador at Paris, reported that he had good reason to believe that Stafford might be bribed to furnish information to the King of Spain.³¹ Again, in May, 1586, Mendoza wrote to his master:

Charles Arundel, an English gentleman, to whom your Majesty granted eighty crowns pension a month, in respect of the queen of Scot-

³⁰ There is evidence that Walsingham set another spy upon Stafford in 1587. This spy was none other than the notorious Gilbert Gifford, who returned to France after his betrayal of Mary Stuart and served for a time as a secret agent for England in Paris until he was finally discovered. His correspondence from Paris (unsigned, but easily identified by his curiously immature handwriting) is mostly preserved among the St. P. Domestic in the English Public Record Office. Some of it is adequately calendared in the *Cal. Domestic, Addenda*, 1580-1625. Gifford wrote to Thomas Philipps, Walsingham's secretary, April 26, 1587: "Il nostro vecchio is not now to be depended on . . . neither is the English ambassador in any case to be used for causes well known to you already, which daily increase." St. P. Domestic, vol. CC., no. 49. Again he wrote in July, 1588: "Fitzherbert continueth Arundel's course for Stafford. All the world marvels how he is spared." St. P. Domestic, vol. CCXII., no. 54. Stafford wrote to Burghley January 8, 1587/8: "Within this fortnight, Gilbert Gifford is taken with a queane a bed, and after he was gone, seeking his chamber, letters have been found written to him by Mr. Secretary's commandment, as they write to him to egg him to inquire of me, and he hath confessed that, being heartened to it, he hath written of me, of Lilly my man, of Grimston my man, so many things that both I and mine are in worse predicament than the rankest traitors that are on this side the seas. I have some of the letters, both of the originals out of England and his answers in his own hand. I hope to have more." St. P. France, vol. XVIII., f. 11. Cf. also Stafford's letters to Walsingham of December, 1587, in *Cal. Domestic, Addenda*, 1580-1625, pp. 221-222, 223-230.

³¹ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1580-1586, pp. 528-529.

land, was constantly in the house of the English ambassador here when he was in Paris, which Muzio [the Duke of Guise] assures me was at his instructions, as the English ambassador was needy, and he, Muzio, had given him 3,000 crowns. In return for this the ambassador gave him certain information through this Charles Arundel.³²

Here Mendoza makes precisely the same charge against Stafford that Rogers had made, namely, that he was receiving money from the Duke of Guise in return for information. Since it is hardly possible that Mendoza and Rogers were in collusion in this matter and since Mendoza got his information from Guise himself, there can be little doubt that the gravest charge which Rogers made against Stafford was essentially a just one and that Stafford was, as early as the autumn of 1586, if not earlier, playing the traitor.³³

By the end of the year 1586 these facts about Stafford can fairly be said to be well substantiated: first, that Walsingham suspected him of treachery; secondly, that the two most active of Mary Stuart's agents in France, Thomas Morgan and the Archbishop of Glasgow, both believed that Stafford might be serviceable in Mary's cause; thirdly, that Charles Arundel asserted that Stafford could be bribed; fourthly, that one of Walsingham's spies in France directly accused Stafford of selling information to the Duke of Guise; fifthly, that the Duke of Guise himself told the Spanish ambassador in Paris that he had paid money to Stafford and had received information from him. None of these facts absolutely proves that Stafford had treacherous intentions towards his sovereign. He may have been merely posing as a traitor before Arundel and Guise and the rest in order to learn more completely the purposes and plans of Elizabeth's enemies. But there is very little evidence to support this explanation of his conduct and the facts just stated certainly establish a strong presumption against his honesty. It is with them in mind that one should approach the further evidences of his infidelity revealed in the fourth volume of the *Spanish State Papers, Elizabeth*.

On January 24, 1587, Mendoza wrote to Philip II. that the King of Navarre had written to Elizabeth complaining that Stafford was supplying certain information to the Duchess of Guise. Apparently Mendoza heard of this through Charles Arundel, who had it in turn from Stafford himself. Mendoza went on to say:

Charles Arundell tells me that Stafford flew into a terrible rage at this, and swore he would never be satisfied until he had been revenged

³² *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1580-1586, p. 575.

³³ Later in the same year Mendoza bore testimony again to Stafford's treachery. *Cf. ibid.*, p. 648.

on Bearn [Navarre] and the other too, no matter by what means; and that now was the time for your Majesty to make use of him (Stafford) if you wished any service done. He pressed Arundell to ascertain from your Majesty in what way he might serve you, and you should see by his acts how willing he was to do so. . . . This ambassador is much pressed for money, and even if he had not made such an offer as this, his poverty is reason enough to expect from him any service, if he saw it was to be remunerated.

Mendoza went on to say that just as he was about to sign his letter Charles Arundel brought news from Stafford that a fleet was about to be despatched from England against Portugal.

The ambassador told Arundell to advise your Majesty of this instantly, which, he said, would serve as a sample and hansom of his goodwill; and within a fortnight or three weeks he would report whether the despatch of the fleet was being persisted in, together with the exact number of ships, men, stores and all other details of the project. . . . As it is very important that your Majesty should have prompt advice of such armaments, although the ambassador appears ready enough to give intelligence on that, or any other point in your Majesty's interest, it will nevertheless be advisable to send him 2000 crowns with which to buy a jewel.³⁴

Philip II. replied to this letter on February 27, 1587, as follows:

The new correspondent whom you have obtained to keep you informed on English affairs is very appropriate. You may thank the intermediary from me and urge him to continue in his good service. Give the other one the 2000 crowns, or the jewel you suggest of similar value, although it may be more secret and he may prefer that it should be given in money, through the same intermediary.³⁵

There can be no doubt that the "new correspondent" here referred to is Stafford, and the intermediary Arundel. Nor can there be any doubt that the King of Spain was about to give Stafford 2000 crowns or its equivalent for value received.

In a letter from Mendoza to Philip written about a month later, on March 26, Mendoza referred again to this matter: "The new confidant wishes to have an interview with me, and as soon as a certain person leaves his home I will give him the 2000 crowns which your Majesty has been pleased to grant him. I have also thanked the third party."³⁶

Evidently the "new confidant" refers here to Stafford and the "third party" to Arundel. In view of this letter the statement by Professor Pollard that the hypothesis which identifies Stafford with

³⁴ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, pp. 7-8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

the "new confidant" is contradicted on every page of the *Spanish Calendar* needs some modification to say the least.

Stafford's next appearance in the *Spanish Calendar* in this connection is under the appellation "new friend". Professor Pollard does not believe that this term should be interpreted to mean Stafford, but Mendoza's letter to Philip of April 27, 1587, with its reference to the 2000 crowns already mentioned, furnishes pretty conclusive evidence to the contrary. Mendoza wrote: "Since my last I have seen the new friend who had expressed a desire for an interview. I thanked him from your Majesty for his goodwill, and gave him the 2000 crowns which your Majesty ordered, through the third person who was present."⁸⁷

It is evident that on some occasions, at any rate, the terms "new correspondent", "new confidant", and "new friend", as used in the *Spanish Calendar*, cannot refer to anyone else but Sir Edward Stafford. It is therefore fair to presume that these terms, when they occur in the Spanish despatches at this time, refer to Stafford unless there be positive evidence to the contrary. Professor Pollard has undertaken to prove that these terms cannot possibly stand for Stafford by pointing out that "new friend" and "new confidant" are often spoken of in the despatches in such conjunction with the English ambassador as to establish the fact that they were different persons. For example, he quotes the following passage among several others: "The new confidant informs me that the English ambassador has seen Secretary Pinart."

On the face of it this evidence seems fairly conclusive. But Professor Pollard has not taken account of the fact that Philip and Mendoza were both anxious to prevent their dealings with Stafford from becoming known. Despatches were often intercepted and often deciphered. It may therefore have seemed wise to the king and to his servant to pretend to make two persons out of the "new friend" and the "English ambassador" when they were in reality only one. So when Mendoza reported that the "new confidant" had sent him certain news gathered from Stafford's despatches, absurd as it may seem to Professor Pollard, Mendoza may simply be using this form of circumlocution to conceal the fact that Stafford was supplying news from his own despatches. Since it has already been established that "new confidant" and "new friend" do certainly, at times, stand for Stafford, this hypothesis is at least worth trying.

One of the examples which Professor Pollard quotes is from a letter of Philip to Mendoza of June 20, 1587. Philip wrote: "I

⁸⁷ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, pp. 74-75.

note what the new friend told you about the wish of the English to form a closer union with the Christian King, and the active steps that were being taken with that object by the English ambassador."

Here plainly Philip would have us believe that "new friend" and "English ambassador" were two different persons. Further along in the same letter Philip uses the term "new friend" again: "The remark made by the new friend to Believre about my rights to the English crown had better have been left unsaid."³⁸

This comment has reference to a letter from Mendoza of May 20 containing a long account of an interview between Stafford and Believre on the question of the English succession, in the course of which Stafford had asserted Philip's claim to the English throne.³⁹ It is plain therefore that Philip uses the term "new friend" in this connection to apply to Stafford, though earlier in the same letter he has made them out to be two different persons. This is sufficient to prove that the pretended distinction between them was merely a blind devised by the king and his ambassador to conceal Stafford's treachery.

The channel of communication was no sooner established between the "new friend" and the Spaniards than Mendoza began to exploit what he made out to be a new source of information from a correspondent whom he called Julius or Julio. Hume holds that Julio was merely another name for Stafford. Professor Pollard makes strong objection to this interpretation. He points out that the Spanish despatches in the first place represent Julio and Stafford as having been two different persons and, in the second place, make it evident that Julio was sending news from England and so cannot possibly be identified with an English ambassador resident in Paris. It is perfectly clear that the despatches support both of Professor Pollard's contentions. But the question naturally arises whether, in the case of Julio as in the case of the "new friend", the distinction made between Spanish pensioner and English ambassador was not made simply for purposes of concealment and whether the locating of Julio in London was not, after all, merely another device contrived to pull wool over the eyes of English spies.

In regard to the first point, Philip's marginal annotations to Mendoza's allusions to Julio are illuminating. Against one reference to Julio the king writes: "I think Julius must here mean the confidant [*i. e.*, Stafford] as it is to him that Cecil writes."⁴⁰ And again when Mendoza writes: "Julius advises me that the queen of England has

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

written to her ambassador here," Philip remarks: "I think he must be the same man."⁴¹

Whether Philip was right or wrong it is evident from his observations that Mendoza's obvious effort to draw a distinction between Julio and Stafford did not prevent his master from believing, and therefore need not prevent us from believing, that they were the same person.

With regard to the second point that Professor Pollard makes, namely, that Julio was in England, there can be no doubt that Mendoza sought to convey that impression. But he sometimes forgot himself. In September, 1587, he wrote:

Julius has informed me that Drake's voyage is abandoned, as he has been assured by letters from Cecil. These are things that Cecil and Walsingham are in the habit of writing to him. . . . Julius has again been approached on behalf of Épernon with regard to the capture of one of your Majesty's frontier fortresses.⁴²

From this passage it is pretty clear that in September, 1587, at any rate, Julio was in France. Where else would Épernon have been likely to approach him? And why, if he was in England, did Walsingham and Burghley both write him English news? From Mendoza's letter of November 18, 1587, it is clear enough that, at that date also, Julio was not in England: "Julius", he wrote, "has received letters from England", etc., etc.⁴³ Again, on December 27 of the same year, Mendoza wrote: "In order not to lose Julius I will myself run the risk of going to his house at night."⁴⁴ This can mean nothing else than that Julio was living in Paris at the end of the year 1587. Again, in the following July, Mendoza wrote: "I have already paid Julio 500 crowns, and . . . will in a few days hand him the other 500 crowns."⁴⁵ Unless we assume that Mendoza was going to reach the 500 crowns across the Channel, Julio was evidently in Paris still. In a word, if some of the evidence in the *Spanish Calendar* supports the conclusion that Julio was in London, some of it leaves no doubt that Julio was in Paris. It may conceivably be held that this mysterious person was, at different times, on different sides of the Channel, but, if so, it is rather surprising that Mendoza makes no mention whatever of his comings and goings.⁴⁶

⁴¹ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, p. 139.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 352.

⁴⁶ There appears to be no absolute conflict of dates. Julio, by Mendoza's showing, was in London June 16, 1587, and January 21, February 7, April 20, and July 29, 1588 (*Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, pp. 118, 198, 213, 278, 366).

Yet, had Mendoza been quite consistent in representing Julio as a correspondent in England, it would still be conceivable that Julio and Stafford were identical. In any case Professor Pollard's assertion that Julio's pretended residence in England disposes of the possibility of his being Stafford can hardly be regarded as conclusive.

Whoever Julio really was, it must be borne in mind that he was supplying to the Spanish ambassador exactly the same sort of information that Stafford, in the guise of the "new friend" and the "new confidant", had supplied. This was so manifestly the case that Philip II. of Spain, when he first heard of Julio, at once jumped to the conclusion that he must be Stafford under a new name. This fact in itself establishes a strong presumption in favor of the identity of the two men, and the presumption is strengthened by the many attributes which they had in common. Julio, whoever he was, was certainly in the employ of the English government in a position of great importance and great trust.⁴⁷ On one occasion he boasted that he could prevent the queen from levying German soldiers to assist the French Huguenots.⁴⁸ Burghley and Walsingham both corresponded with him and revealed to him directly important state secrets;⁴⁹ but he evidently regarded Walsingham as his enemy.⁵⁰ He was also on intimate terms with the Lord Admiral Howard.⁵¹ He was in a position to get very accurate information about the despatches sent to and from the English ambassador at Paris. Finally, he was deep in debt.⁵²

It will be remarked that all of these things are equally true of Stafford. He also was in the employ of the English government in a position of great importance and great trust. He, more than any one else except perhaps a privy councillor, was in a position to influence Elizabeth's policy towards the Huguenots. He corresponded regularly with both Burghley and Walsingham and believed Walsingham to be his enemy. He was the brother-in-law of Lord Admiral Howard. None knew better than he the contents of the French despatches. There is also ample proof of his debts; he himself confessed to Burghley that they were very great.⁵³

and in Paris, November 18, and December 27, 1587, and July 24, 1588 (*ibid.*, pp. 162, 183, 352).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 310, 320.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 189, 198, 213, 230, 278.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 173.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 176, 190, 310, 320.

⁵³ Stafford to Burghley, November 6, 1586: "For their whisperings that I should be in great debt and that by unmeasurable playing, it is very true that I am in great debt . . . but the cause of it is . . . the manner of living I have lived here, the extreme dearth of the time and the extraordinary charges." St. P. France, vol. XVI., f. 139.

Upon this last point Professor Pollard raises particular objection. Mendoza wrote to Philip II. on one occasion that Julio was in arrears in his account with the queen 15,000 crowns. Professor Pollard declares this "a fact which alone would dispose of the idea that he was an ambassador". Exactly why an ambassador should not be in debt to the queen Professor Pollard does not state. And there is evidence to prove that Stafford was behind in his accounts with the queen. Mendoza wrote to Philip on October 2, 1587:

Julius also informs me that the 12,000 crowns now in the ambassador's hands, out of the 100,000 sent to him by the Queen to give to Béarn [Navarre] and others, are to be employed expressly in aiding the prince of Conti and Count Soissons. But, as the ambassador is overwhelmed with debt, he has spent the money. . . . Julius says that the reason why Walsingham has urged that the ambassador should be ordered to give Soissons these 12,000 crowns is that the Queen should discover that he had spent them, and so he might be disgraced.⁵⁴

Here obviously, if Mendoza was accurately informed, was a situation which might well have placed Stafford several thousand crowns in arrears to the queen. The question at once arises as to whether Mendoza was, or was not, well informed. Upon this particular point, fortunately, there is confirmatory evidence in the English State Papers. On September 12, 1587, Walsingham wrote to Burghley: "Your Lordship, by the enclosed from Mr. Stafford, may perceive how much there remaineth in his hands of the 18,000 crowns which I wish were delivered to the Count of Soissons in case he continue in his former resolution to join with the king of Navarre."⁵⁵

This proves at least that certain money was in Stafford's charge and that Walsingham was urging its delivery to Soissons. It does not, however, prove that Stafford had already spent the money. Upon this point a letter from Stafford to Burghley of March 31, 1588, is more illuminating:

If *Walsingham*, upon that which I writ to him, as I writ to you once, had showed me as much friendship as by others he professed to me, I might come out of this; for, as I writ to your Lordship, I desired him to be a means only that that which remaineth here might not be called upon that I might serve my turn of it till I came home; for I know there are a great many that have deserved, in my conscience, a great deal less than I, have had greater favors. But he writ to me he durst not speak to her Majesty about it and that was all the answer he made me, which was not that which I desired at his hands; for I desired him not to speak to her Majesty of it, knowing what choler any such demands moveth her to, though men do deserve never so well; and if he had been disposed to do me pleasure, without any such demand at her

⁵⁴ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, p. 149.

⁵⁵ Harleian MSS. 6994, f. 96.

Majesty's hands, he might have purchased the favor not to have that thought upon, and if I might have that favor I would find means to content everybody.⁵⁶

The wording of this letter is obscure but the meaning of it appears to be that Stafford had requested Walsingham to contrive that the money (probably that destined for Soissons which had never been paid over to him) should not be called for in England until Stafford's return home. Apparently all he wanted Walsingham to do was to keep quiet on the subject so that the queen might forget about the money.

The matter is mentioned once again in the English correspondence in a letter from Walsingham to Stafford, dated December 10, 1588: "Her Majesty spoke to me about the 20,000 crowns and blamed me that I had not taken order with you for its return home. I answered I knew not what need she might have to use them there for some special service, wherewith she was satisfied."

Walsingham added that he wished "some way might be devised to content her Majesty in that matter".⁵⁷

Here, then, is pretty strong evidence that Stafford was misappropriating public funds as Mendoza said he was and conclusive proof that he was behind in his accounts with the queen at least 15,000 crowns. So Professor Pollard is quite unjustified in saying that the fact that Julio was behind in his accounts with the queen disposes of the idea that he was Stafford. Quite the contrary, it tends to confirm that idea.

But Mendoza's correspondence furnishes even more convincing evidence of the identity of the two men. On December 19, 1587, he wrote to his master that in consequence of Arundel's death the "new confidant" had requested him to find some other person of trust to convey intelligence between them and added the sentence, already quoted in another connection: "In order not to lose Julio, I will myself run the risk of going to his house at night until I can find a suitable person."⁵⁸

Here evidently the "new confidant", that is to say Stafford, and Julio were one and the same person. Their identity is further borne out by two of Mendoza's letters to Philip of January, 1588. On the 8th of the month Mendoza wrote:

I was obliged to see the new confidant, and he has again pressed me to lay before your Majesty the necessity in which he finds himself in consequence of his allowances being detained by his enemies. . . . I am

⁵⁶ St. P. France, vol. XVIII., f. 103. Walsingham's name is in cipher.

⁵⁷ Cotton MSS., Galba E vi, f. 394.

⁵⁸ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, pp. 182-183.

putting him off, but if he presses me again about it I have determined to seek the money for him. . . . I have also in view that it is nearly a year ago since your Majesty granted him the 2000 crowns.⁵⁹

The granting of these 2000 crowns by Philip to Stafford has already been alluded to and the identity between Stafford and the "new confidant" in that particular transaction established. On January 9, Mendoza wrote again: "I have decided to do with Julius, as you will see by my despatches, as I think it advisable, so as not to lose him and to keep him in a good humour. It is nearly a year since we gave him the 2000 crowns."⁶⁰

Here the identity of Stafford and Julius is past question. In fact, a careful examination of all the available evidence leaves little or no room for doubt that Julius or Julio and Stafford were one and the same person.

Stafford then, in the various guises of "new friend", "new confidant", Julius and Julio, was evidently supplying the Spanish ambassador in Paris regularly with news of English and French affairs. The question still remains whether the news supplied was of a sort to betray English interests and to make him out a traitor or whether it consisted simply of unimportant matters, disclosed perhaps for the purpose of winning Mendoza's confidence and of securing in return important information which might be serviceable to his mistress. It is conceivable that Stafford may have been posing as a traitor to Mendoza in order to betray Mendoza in turn. This is the explanation of his conduct which Stafford himself was probably prepared to offer and this is the one which Professor Pollard seems disposed to accept.

But the briefest consideration of the information which Stafford regularly supplied to Mendoza effectually disposes of this interpretation of his conduct. Since the midsummer of 1585, Spain and England had been virtually at war. When Stafford began his dealings with Mendoza in the early spring of 1587 Sir Francis Drake was being prepared with the greatest secrecy for his famous expedition to singe King Philip's beard.⁶¹ Almost the first information with which Stafford supplied Mendoza was as to the plans for this expedition and subsequently he kept Mendoza constantly informed of Drake's movements, of the number of his ships, their crews, their armaments, and their probable destination.⁶² Again in the following year, when Elizabeth proposed to despatch Drake to the Spanish

⁵⁹ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, pp. 189-190.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁶¹ Corbett, *The Spanish War*, pp. xvii-xviii (Navy Records Society).

⁶² *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, pp. 8, 27, 69, 72, 87.

coast once more, Stafford betrayed the fact to Mendoza.⁶³ When Elizabeth changed her plans and detained Drake, Mendoza knew of that through Stafford also.⁶⁴ When once again, in March, Drake was ordered to take the offensive, Stafford once more made Mendoza aware of it.⁶⁵ And later, in June, 1588, when the Spanish Armada had already made its first start for England, Stafford supplied the Spaniard with precise news of the movements of Howard's and Drake's fleets.⁶⁶ If this was not the rankest sort of treason, nothing is.⁶⁷

Other evidences of Stafford's double-dealing might be cited as well. For example, he betrayed to Mendoza every particular of the efforts of Elizabeth to form an alliance with Henry III. of France against Spain in the spring of 1588.⁶⁸ But enough has already been said to establish the fact of Stafford's treachery. The motives which induced it can only be guessed at. In part they were probably pecuniary ones.⁶⁹ Stafford was deep in debt and needed money. He had misappropriated public funds and the queen was demanding an account of them. His creditors in France and England were both pressing him and apparently his salary was being withheld in England in order to satisfy their demands.⁷⁰ Altogether he appears to have got from Mendoza 2700 crowns, which was little enough for the services performed.⁷¹ How much he got from the Duke of Guise it is impossible to say. Another motive which prompted him was his antagonism to Walsingham and Leicester and their projects. Elizabeth's hostility to Spain and her interest in the Huguenot cause were both largely due to their instigation. Stafford disapproved of both policies and his desire to thwart them was further stimulated by his desire to thwart their promoters. It may be that he regarded

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-194; Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, II. 119.

⁶⁴ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, pp. 197, 213.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 230; Corbett, *Drake and the Tudor Navy*, II. 129.

⁶⁶ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, p. 319.

⁶⁷ On the other hand, Stafford apparently tried to convince the English government, in the spring of 1588, that Philip had abandoned his intention of sending the Armada. Howard wrote to Walsingham on January 24, 1587/8: "I cannot tell what to think of my brother Stafford's advertisement, for if it be true that the King of Spain's forces be dissolved, I would not wish the Queen's Majesty to be at this charges that she is at; but if it be but a device, knowing that a little thing maketh us too careless, then I know not what may come of it." *Defeat of the Span. Armada*, I. 46 (Navy Records Society).

⁶⁸ *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, pp. 86-88, 149, 173, 197, 214, 223, 261.

⁶⁹ This was the chief motive which Mendoza ascribed to him. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 176, 189, 310, 320.

⁷¹ This is all that Mendoza indicates that he paid Stafford (*cf. ibid.*, pp. 74, 352, 490). Philip II. evidently authorized Mendoza to pay over 4000 crowns altogether (*ibid.*, 196) but, apparently, it was not all paid.

both the Spanish and the French wars as Walsingham's and Leicester's affairs, not the queen's, and was not altogether conscious of treachery to his sovereign in betraying the plans of his personal enemies. His hatred of Navarre, who had hinted to Elizabeth of his treachery, no doubt furnished him with another motive as well.⁷² Finally, it is not unlikely that Stafford had an eye to his own fortunes in the event of the queen's death. After Mary Stuart's execution he announced his belief that Philip II. had the best title to the English succession.⁷³ Possibly he expected that Elizabeth would not live much longer and that Philip would make good his claims. He told Mendoza on one occasion that if the queen "disappeared" many of the principal people in England would rally to Philip's support.⁷⁴ On another occasion he offered to secure for himself the viceroyalty of Ireland and to hand over the island to Philip when Elizabeth "disappears".⁷⁵ All these look like bids for the favor of a future sovereign. It is worth noticing that after the failure of the Armada his interest in Spain flagged. Mendoza discovered that he was supplying false news and finally, before the close of the year 1588, abandoned hope of getting any more out of him.⁷⁶

How much was known in England about his treachery it is difficult to say. Walsingham knew about it certainly and probably Leicester also. The surprising thing about the whole situation is that in view of Walsingham's knowledge, Stafford was allowed to keep his place. The probable explanation of this fact lies in the character of Walsingham's informants. The testimony of disreputable fellows like Rogers and Gifford could hardly have carried weight against a man of Stafford's birth and connections. Walsingham therefore may have found it advisable not to risk a public exposure. Elizabeth herself revealed no signs of a distrust of Stafford. He returned to England in the spring of 1589⁷⁷ but was sent back to France in the autumn of the same year on a mission to Henry of Navarre. His diplomatic career seems to have terminated upon his return to England late in the year 1590, though he was not supplanted as ambassador to France until the following July. The sentiment at the

⁷² *Cal. St. P. Spanish*, 1587-1603, p. 7.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 430, 468, 477, 501.

⁷⁷ Professor Pollard, in his article on Stafford in the *Dict. of Nat. Biography*, intimates that Stafford remained in France until October, 1589, but it is clear that he left in the spring of that year. He announced his arrival in England to Walsingham in a letter from Dartmouth dated April 8, 1589. *St. P. France*, vol. XIX., f. 103.

English court was probably more favorable to his fortunes at this time than it had been, since his two powerful enemies, Leicester and Walsingham, were both dead. There was some talk of making him Walsingham's successor as principal secretary but the matter fell through and Elizabeth eventually appointed Burghley's son, Sir Robert Cecil, instead. Stafford, indeed, never did occupy any position of significance under the queen after his return from France, a fact which may possibly be interpreted to mean that either she or Burghley distrusted him. At the time of his death, in 1605, there were no apparent smirches on his reputation.

CONYERS READ.